Year 2 Direct Support Professional Training

Resource Guide



Session #4 Communication, Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution

Department of Education and the Regional Occupational Centers and Programs in partnership with the Department of Developmental Services

List of Class Sessions

Session	Topic	Time	
1	Introduction and Supporting Choice: Identifying Preferences	3 hours	
2	Person-Centered Planning and Services	3 hours	
3	Person-Centered Planning and Services	3 hours	
4	Communication, Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution	3 hours	
5	Positive Behavior Support: Understanding Behavior as Communication	3 hours	
6	Positive Behavior Support: Adapting Support Strategies to Ensure Success	3 hours	
7	Teaching Strategies: Personalizing Skill Development	3 hours	
8	Teaching Strategies: Ensuring Meaningful Life Skills	3 hours	
9	Supporting Quality Life Transitions	3 hours	
10	Wellness: Medication	3 hours	
11	Wellness: Promoting Good Health	3 hours	
12	Assessment	2 hours	
	Total Class Sessions Total Class Time	12 35 hours	

Key Words

In this session, the key words are:

- Communication Systems
- Sign Language
- Active Listening
- Conflict Management
- Decision Making
- Coping Strategies

Information Brief **Tips for Communication**

In Year 1, we learned that in order to support people with developmental disabilities, we may need to know more about how an individual communicates. For an individual who communicates using words that are easily understood, the task is simpler. We have to work harder to understand the messages from individuals who rely on gestures, signs, and facial expressions to communicate.

We also talked about how to keep our communication with others easy to understand.

We learned that a person's behavior is often used as a way to communicate. Through behavior, a person can communicate what they want, what they don't want and when they want attention.





Let's review a few tips for assisting an individual to use communication in an effective way:

- Use words when the person feels something (sore, hurt, tired....)
- Use all chances to identify objects in daily routine
- As you assist the person (dressing, serving meal)
- Point to pictures of objects in books, saying them distinctly
- Point out objects while on a walk, in car, at park, at store
- Have person watch your mouth as you pronounce word
- Speak in short sentences when giving directions
- Be sure to pronounce the entire word
- Reward progress in making sounds, pronouncing words
- Be sure your movements are simple when training
- Encourage people to use all of their senses
- Listen carefully to what the person says or attempts to say



Information Brief What to Teach?

What things about communication should we be teaching to people?

- Reasons for communicating, for example, asking for information on how to find something in a store
- Social skills involved with communication, for example, taking turns talking during a conversation
 - How far to stand away from someone when talking to them
 - How to make choices
 - How to express feelings
 - When it's okay to be loud
 - When should someone be quiet

Most of all, we want to assist people to control and participate more effectively in his/her environment in the most meaningful way possible. What we teach is as important as how we teach it. If a person is communicating through pictures or graphic symbols, we may need to spend more structured time to assure that the symbol used matches what the person wants to communicate. We would also want to use those symbols throughout the day for routines and activities, so that there are a lot of chances to practice them. For someone who is learning to make choices through facial expressions, we would also want to make sure that there are a number of chances for him or her to make a choice and to practice the facial expression.

Information Brief Ways to Support Communication Every Day

Here are some questions you can ask yourself each day. Your answers will help support people as they learn to communicate.

In what ways do you create opportunities within daily routines to promote interaction? This would be talking to the person while completing hygiene, eating, dressing routines to find out more about the person, this also gives them a chance to better let you know what they like and don't like.

In what ways do you pace routines so that conversation can occur, by allowing time for the person to respond? Sometimes we think we know how a person will answer, so we answer our own questions. Or we are so busy, that we ask a question, and don't really wait for a response. How many times have you asked someone "How are you?" but don't really wait to hear their answer?

Do you wait for a response? Some people make take longer to understand the question, and need time to figure out how to answer. Sometimes the response may take a very long time.

In what ways do you acknowledge the person's attempt to communicate?
Remember that everyone communicates in a different way, and even a small sound or

a gesture needs to be noticed. That will let the person know that what they are trying to tell you is important to you.

In what ways do you avoid anticipating the person's needs? If we have known the person a long time, we often think we know what they need. But if we make opportunities for someone to tell us what they need, we again let them know that their communication is important. And sometimes the person's needs change, and we want to hear about those changes from them.

In what ways do you provide opportunities to make choices and avoid making decisions for people? This is also hard to do when we know a person well. Remember that we want to take every chance possible for a person to tell us what they like and don't like, and what choice they would make. These choices will be different for everyone, and might be deciding between two salad dressings or between several activities. There are many choices to make all during the day.

In what ways do you talk to the person about the routines as they occur? It's important to give words to the activities as you go. Imagine if you had to go through a day in total silence. By talking through each activity, we increase the chances that the person will learn the words as well as the order of the activities. That will help when there is a new DSP or with relief staff, as well as with family members and friends. DSPs should talk throughout the day with the people they support, even if you don't know if the person really understands. We don't always know what a person understands.

Information Brief Active Listening

Even in the best of situations, where no one else but you and another person are in the room, listening is very difficult. Realistically, the life of a DSP doesn't always lend itself to those private moments when listening would be very easy. When we add more people, and their interests, we've increased the difficulty of listening. Robert Montgomery suggests that people who want to improve their listening skills should use the LADDER approach.

Responsively listen

Express emotions with control

Don't change the subject

Don't interrupt

Ask questions

Look at the other person



Active listening is taking the time to:

- Hear the words
- Figure out what they mean
- Respond to the words

Hearing what a person says is not the same as listening. It's when we take the time to see if what we heard was what the person really meant that we begin to actively listen.

The ways that we might try to figure the word out might include:

Asking the person questions to see if we got it right or paraphrasing (saying the words differently) what the person said, like "so you think we should go to a movie tonight?"

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Information Brief Advocacy

Advocacy is:

Helping people help themselves

Building self confidence

Supporting independence

Telling people their rights

Telling people their options

Providing assistance and training

Helping locate services

Asking people what they want

Treating adults like adults

Advocacy is not:

Taking over a person's life

Making a person dependent

Doing everything for a person

Not informing a person of his or her rights

Making decisions for people

Controlling people

Treating adults like children

Limiting options

Knowing what is best because you are a professional

Not respecting choices

Information Brief Conflict Strategies

Conflict is an unavoidable part of everyday life. Each of us deals with conflict in a different way. Disagreements make some people uncomfortable. Others enjoy a good argument.

As a DSP, you face potential conflicts on a daily basis. While you cannot change the fact that conflict will happen, you can make it a more positive experience.

Here's a strategy that may be helpful when dealing with conflict:

- (1) separate person from problem;
- (2) figure out each person's goals and interests;
- (3) find answers that work for both people; and,
- (4) try to agree.

It is important to define the problem before trying to figure out solutions. Sometimes two people see the problem in very different ways.

Here are some rules for conflict that are useful whether you are dealing with conflict on the job or in your personal relationships:

- Use "I" statements (I feel, I think)
- Be willing to resolve the problem
- Respect each other
- Stay in the present (Discuss only the current conflict)
- Stick to the topic
- Don't interrupt the person who is talking
- Recognize that the other person has their own feelings
- Ask questions to understand the other person's side



Information Brief

Decision-Making

Spencer Johnson, M.D., in *Yes or No: A Guide To Better Decisions* outlines a map to decision making. He says that we have to use our heads to ask questions, and our hearts to find better answers. We ask ourselves if we have looked at all of the options and if we have thought through all of the information. Then we consider if the decision feels right to us and whether we deserve better.

This skill can be taught to people we support as well. A Southern California agency (Horrigan Cole Enterprises) has developed a way to teach decision making skills to people with developmental disabilities called S.T.O.G. It follows the same path as Dr. Johnson's map.



The "See" step is where the problem is defined. What is the choice to make?

The "Think" step is listing the possible solutions, much like we did earlier. Then we have to "think" with our head and our heart. Is this the best choice and how do I feel about this choice? We also can "think" about who might be affected by my choice and how will this choice affect my life or the dreams I have.

The "Okay?" step is where the decision is made.

The "Go" step is acting on the decision and asking how well it worked.

STOG is just one way to help people to make decisions. **No one way to make decisions is the right way.**

Information Brief Coping Strategies

When we get upset

We all get angry or upset from time to time. As we mature, we learn some strategies that help us cope when we get angry or upset. It is important to understand that it is normal to get upset from time to time.

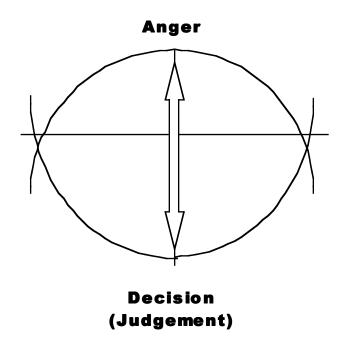
It is not bad or wrong to get upset.

It's how we act when we get upset that's important!

When we get angry or upset, our body goes through some changes. One of these changes is that our blood flow INCREASES to the muscles. At the same time, our blood flow DECREASES significantly to the liver, the kidney, and (most importantly) to the BRAIN! This means that when we are aroused, angry, or upset, our ability to think is impaired (we can't think clearly). This is the worst time for a person to try to make important decisions or deal with a frustrating situation.

We should try to regain our self-control before we try to deal with frustrating situations! We can do this by learning to use coping strategies.

Note: The figure below shows what happens when we get upset. The middle line represents a normal level of anger (upset). The upper curve indicates how upset we are. The lower curve represents our level of judgement, or ability to think clearly. There is an inverse relationship between our getting upset and our level of judgement, which is our ability to think clearly and make rational decisions. This means that the more upset we get, the harder it i



Information Brief Teaching Coping Strategies

The BEST time to teach an individual to use a coping strategy is when the individual is calm and in a good mood, long before or after an outburst.

The WORST time to teach a coping strategy is when the individual is upset, because this is the time when he or she is <u>least likely</u> to understand what you are trying to teach them.

Here are some ways you can teach coping strategies:

- Help the individual to identify people, places and things that get them upset. They can start to practice coping strategies when these things are present.
- Help the individual identify their "warning signs" that signal when they are getting upset. (Things they do or say, how they feel, does their breathing change, do certain muscle groups tighten up, etc.)
- Help the individual identify 2 or 3 different strategies they can use when they get upset, as an alternative to losing control, "blowing up" or having an outburst. (Examples typically include: Walking away, telling a individual to stop bothering you, taking deep breaths, talking to a DSP about what is bothering them, or other identified strategies).

- Choose a time to PRACTICE the alternative coping strategy when the individual is calm and in a good mood. It should be a non-threatening situation. (You can do this with a role play by "acting out" a situation that typically upsets the individual and have them practice using one or more of the coping strategies that they feel comfortable with).
- When entering places where the individual is likely to get upset, or just before a situation where the individual is likely to get upset, spend a few minutes with the individual and ask them if they remember what they can do if they get upset. Remind them what to do if they have forgotten. (This can be done verbally, with written cue cards, pictures or signing, depending on the individual's learning style). It is a good strategy to rehearse what to do in advance.
- threatening situation, the DSP may still need to be available to give the individual a cue that helps them remember what to do in a real situation.

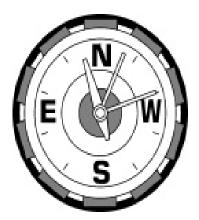
 (For example, if a peer is bothering them and they are showing signs of anger and losing control, the DSP should assist by saying "remember what you can do when s/he bothers you" to help cue the individual to use their coping

strategies.

Once the individual is successful

at using the skill in a non-

- After an individual loses control and forgets to use their coping strategies, ask them what they can do instead, the next time they get upset. Help remind them of the alternative coping strategies they can use when they feel angry or upset.
- It is also important for the individuals we support to know that we get upset sometimes too! Again, getting upset is normal. It's what we do when we get upset that is the issue. We have all developed some strategies that allow us to cope with frustrating situations and "keep it together" even when situations are very stressful.



Key Word Dictionary Communication, Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution Session #4

Active Listening

The key elements of active listing are: (1) hear the words; (2) figure them out; and (3) then respond.

Communication Systems

The basic types of communication systems are: (1) sign language; (2) communication boards; and (3) gestures.

Conflict Management

Looking at both sides of a conflict, figuring out what both sides want and finding answers that work for both parties.

Coping Strategies

Things that a person can do to help them to calm down when they get upset or angry. This can include taking a deep breath, talking to someone about what is bothering them, going for a walk, taking a break, etc. All people use a variety of these strategies as part of their self-control plan.

Decision-Making

The ability to look at a situation, weigh all of the possibilities and make an informed choice.

Self-Control Plan

Outlines the coping strategies a person uses (or is learning to use) in order to calm down and regain their self-control when they get upset or angry. It also states how the coping strategies will be taught and practiced by the person. A written Self-Control Plan is sometimes included in the Support Plan.

Sign Language

Using hand signs to communicate letters, words, phrases, and feelings.

If You Want to Read More About Communication, Problem-Solving and Conflict Resolution

Communicate with Confidence: How to Say it Right the First Time and Every Time

Boober, D. and Donnelly, R.R. (1994). ISBN: 0-07-006455-5

The book starts with a touching story about miscommunication, and goes on to give 23 chapters of practical and easy to read advise on improving communication in business as well as in our personal lives. Booher says that personally or professionally, communication is a life or death issue. The book has over 1,000 tips for improving communication, including how to ask questions, how to answer questions, apologizing, criticizing, and negotiating, among others.

Partners in Everyday Communicative Exchanges

Butterfield, N., Arthur, M., Sigafoos, J. (1995). MacLennan and Petty Limited; ISBN: 086433 088 X.

This book is written for teachers, speech pathologists, and everyone who may communicate with a person who has severe disability. It is complete with case studies and a chapter on challenging behavior. It contains workshop material for the person who may have to teach others about communication.

Augmenting Basic Communication in Natural Contexts

Johnson, J.M., Baumgart, D., Helmstetter, E., and Curry, C.A. (1996). Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co. Inc.; ISBN 1-55766-243-6.

This book includes a step by step guide to completing an assessment of communication and creating a system for people with severe disabilities. Chapter 10, about Kevin will show the reader some systems that work.

Communicating in Sign: Creative Ways to Learn American Sign Language

Chambers, D.P. (1998); Fireside; ISBN 0-684-83520-7

Language comes from the way we use our bodies to communicate and how we understand the emotions that are communicated to us. The five components of ASL are eye contact, facial expression, body language, mouth movements, and hand movements. Chambers walks the reader through these components, giving illustrated signs as well as offering a chapter on deaf culture.

Intercultural Communication Training: An Introduction

Brislin, R. and Yoshida, T. (1994); Sage Publications, ISBN 0-8039-5074-8

This publication draws from intercultural communication and dross cultural training, and emphasizes face to face communication. The information contained in the book applies to any situation in which effective communication and good personal relations need to be established with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Listening By Doing

Galvin, K. (1985) National Textbook Company

Galvin reviews the process of communication, and gives helpful hints on how to improve listening skills. Readers interested in the emotions behind communication will find the section on critical listening skills quite helpful. The section called Loaded Language will be helpful to the DSP.

For those who surf the web:

<u>http://dww.deafworldweb.org/</u> is the place to go for a number of internet links related to the deaf community..

http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/general/signlanguage.html has several links to other sites for information about sign language. There is an extensive list of Yamada Language Center Guides to sign language in a variety of languages.

Products

These products are for use in developing communications systems. The images in these products are meant for these systems. The DSP is encouraged to work with a speech therapist in developing an effective system.

Talking Pictures

Crestwood Company 6625 N. Sidney Place Milwaukee, WI 53209-3259 414-352-5678 414-352-5679 Fax

PCS Sign Language Libraries

The Picture Communication Symbols Combination Book Board maker (for Windows and Macintosh) Mayer Johnson Co. PO Box 1579 Solana Beach, CA 92075-7579 800-588-4548 619-550-0449 Fax

Signing Exact English

Modern Signs Press PO Box 1181 Los Alamitos, CA 90720 562-596-8548 562-795-6614 Fax

Pick 'n' Stick on Disk and CD-ROM Pick 'n' Stick Color Packs Imaginart 307 Arizona Street Bisbee, AZ 85603 800-828-1376 800-737-1376 Fax

Worksheets and Activities

Things I Like to Do When I Get Home From Work



I want to go to the bathroom



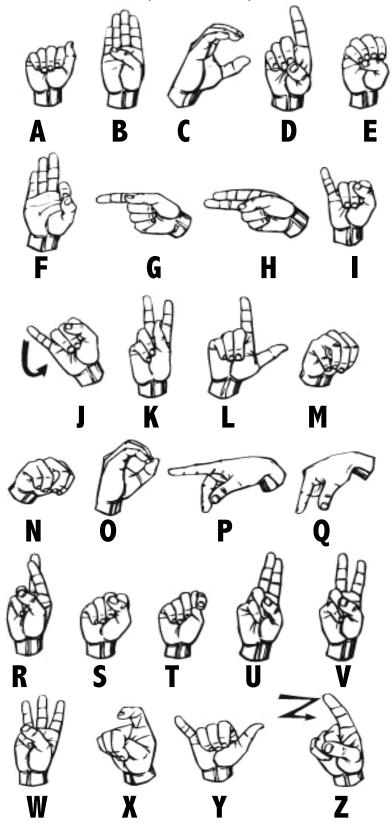
I want to eat a snack



I want to listen to music

ASL Manual Alphabet

From the unnamed website at http://members.tripod.com/~imaware/aslalpha.html



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Some Excerpts from

Signing Illustrated

The Complete Learning Guide

by Mickey Flodin

A Perigee Book (1994)



NAME, CALLED, NAMED

Cross the middle-finger edge of the right H fingers over the index-finger edge of the left H fingers. To sign *called* or *named*, move the crossed H hands in a small forward arc together.

Memory aid: Reminds one that those who cannot write have to sign their *name* with an *X*.



SAD, DEJECTED, DESPONDENT, DOWNCAST, FORLORN, SORROWFUL

With palms facing in, bend the head forward slightly while dropping the open hands down the length of the face. Assume a sad expression.

Memory aid: Suggests an expression of melancholy.



SICK, DISEASE, ILL

Place the right middle finger on the forehead and the left middle finger on the stomach. Assume an appropriate facial expression.

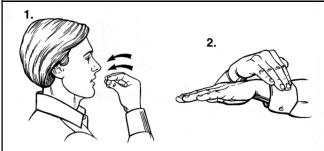
Memory aid: The right hand seems to be feeling the temperature of the forehead, while the left hand indicates an area of discomfort.



BED

Hold both hands palm to palm and place the back of the left hand on the right cheek.

Memory aid: The sign symbolizes resting the head on a pillow.



DINNER, SUPPER

Move the fingers of the right closed *and* hand to the mouth a few times and place the curved right hand over the back of the left flat hand. *Note:* This sign is a combination of *eat* and *night*.

Memory aid: Suggests the meal eaten when the sun has set.



DRINK

Move the right *C* hand in a short arc toward the mouth.

Memory aid: Suggests the action of *drinking* from a glass.



EAT, CONSUME, DINE, FOOD, MEAL The right *and* hand moves toward the mouth a few times.

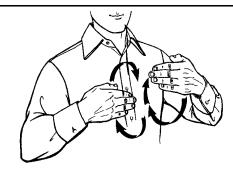
Memory aid: Putting food into the mouth.



GLASS (substance), CHINA, DISH, PORCELAIN

Touch the teeth with the right index finger.

Memory aid: The teeth are breakable, just like *glass*.



HAPPY, DELIGHT, GLAD, JOY, MERRY

Move both flat hands in forward circular movements with palms touching the chest alternately or simultaneously. One hand is often used by itself.

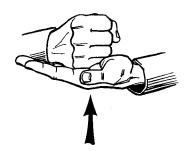
Memory aid: Suggests *happy* feelings springing up from within.



TOILET, BATHROOM

Shake the right *T* hand in front of the chest with the palm facing forward.

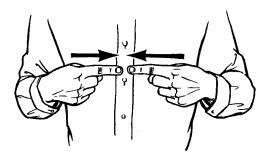
Memory aid: The shaking motion suggests the need to meet a physical requirement.



HELP, AID, ASSIST, BOOST

Place the closed right hand on the flat left palm and lift both hands together.

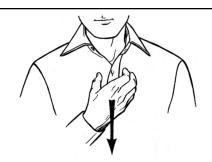
Memory aid: Suggests the giving of a *helping* hand.



PAIN, ACHE, HURT, INJURY, WOUND

Thrust the index fingers toward each other several times. This may be done adjacent to the particular area of the body that is suffering from *pain*.

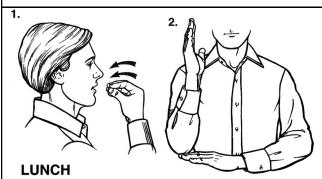
Memory aid: Suggests the throbbing of pain.



HUNGRY, HUNGER, APPETITE, CRAVE, FAMINE, STARVE

Move the thumb and fingers of the right *C* hand down the center of the chest from just below the throat.

Memory aid: Suggests the direction that food travels to the stomach.



Move the fingers of the right closed *and* hand to the mouth a few times. Place the left flat hand at the outer bend of the right elbow, and raise the right forearm to an upright position with palm facing left.

Memory aid: Suggests the meal eaten when the sun is overhead.

Activity: The Ladder Listening Scenarios

1. Armando and DSP

Armando has lived in the Main Street Home for 5 years. He likes living there, but has been upset recently because his roommate just moved out of state to be closer to his family. Armando just got a new roommate, Gerald. Gerald is very quiet and doesn't like to do anything with the group. He goes to bed early every night, and growls when Armando comes into the room after he is asleep. Gerald keeps talking about how he can't wait to move out also. Armando is having a lot of trouble with his roommate talking when he wants to sleep. He and his previous roommate were close friends. He misses him and misses the kind of roommate relationship he had with him. Armando comes to the DSP to explain why he has been so difficult to be around lately.

2. DSP and Day Program Staff

Joseph is very happy at the day program he attends. He does well with the tasks assigned to him. He receives a paycheck for his work. Recently, the day program staff person who knows Joseph best has been calling you (the DSP) to let you know that she intends to discuss a job for Joseph at his next IPP meeting. You don't think that would be the best idea for Joseph. He has a great deal of trouble communicating and you would be very worried about how he'd get around at a job. He once tried to take a bus by himself, got lost and was brought home by the police. So when this staff person talks about him getting to a job and doing well, you are a little skeptical. The staff person asks you to come in to the program to meet with Joseph and herself to discuss Joseph's situation.

3. DSP and Family Member

This is the first time Donna has ever lived anywhere but with her parents. Donna and her parents looked at about 20 different homes before deciding on yours. The parents say that they trust you with their daughter, but their behavior makes you uncomfortable. They come by every evening and check what Donna has eaten, what she wore to program, what time she got up and to whom she spoke during the day. Donna tells you that she wishes her parents would let her grow up. You want to get that message to Donna's parents.

Activity: The Ladder

Responsively listen
Express emotions with control
Don't change the subject
Don't interrupt
Ask questions
Look at the other person



Observers should make notes on how well the people who are communicating observe the LADDER rules.

Make eye contact? (Did the person make eye contact?)

Asking questions (Did the person ask questions to clarify understanding?)

Interrupt? (Did the person rally listen without interrupting?)

Subject? (Did the person stay on the subject?)

Emotions (How did the person show emotions without blowing up?)

Responsiveness (how did the person show they heard and understood the message?)

Class Activity: Stepping into Another's Shoes

1.	Did you share a bedroom while growing up?
2.	Do you share a home with someone now?
3.	Was there ever a time when you didn't like sharing a room?
4.	What made sharing a room or a house difficult?
pla sma did	w imagine that you have to take everything that is important to you, and ce all of these treasures in a small space. You have to share that all space with someone else who also has their treasures to store. Do you know of you choose the person with whom you are to share a room? Does the idea that re might be some differences between people seem likely?

Class Activity: The Way I See It

. Write down what the disagreement is.
Write down what you will discuss.
Write down what result you want from the meeting.

Class Activity: Another Way to See It

1 . Write down what the disagreement is.	
2. Write down what you will discuss.	

3. Write down what result you want from the meeting.

Class Activity: BRAINSTORM

You have \$500 given to your program by a parent whose only restriction on the way it is spent is that everyone in the home has to be part of deciding.

Here are the ideas from	our group:		
We decided on:			

Class Activity: S.T.O.G.



What do I see? What is the choice or problem?



Is this the best choice for me? How do I feel about this choice? Who will be affected by this choice? How will this affect my life and/or my dreams?



Make a decision



GO Go for it! How did it work?

Adapted from Horrigan Cole Enterprises "S.T.O.G."

Activity: Using Coping Strategies

Directions: In order to know when to use your coping strategies, you must first identify when you are getting upset, angry or frustrated. If you don't notice when you are getting upset, you may continue to escalate (get more upset) and say or do something that you will regret later.

Make a list of some mistakes you made when you were mad, angry, or upset:

Salf	. Co	ntro	'I D	lan

What are some things that y	ou o to help	"keep it together"	when you feel	angry,
frustrated or upset?	_		•	

1.	 		 	
2.				
3.	 	 	 	
4.	 			
5.	 	 	 	
6.				